

[*Proof Sheet.*]

R U L E S

OF

T H E S O C I E T I E S

OF THE

L O N D O N W E S L E Y A N M E T H O D I S T

A S S O C I A T I O N .

1836.

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T. C. Johns.
Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is much to be lamented, that many members of the Methodist Society, who have felt it their imperative duty to remonstrate against those innovations upon their Scriptural and Methodistical rights, of late years effected by the Methodist Conference, have either been unrighteously expelled the Connexion, or they have, as a matter of conscience, thought themselves compelled to withdraw. By the new system of Conference Methodism, the Leaders', and all other official Meetings are deprived of all effective participation in the administration of the discipline of the Connexion, and the members of the Methodist Societies are required to submit, to the exclusive legislative powers, and the final and absolute executive jurisdiction of the Travelling Preachers over the whole of the Connexion.

The resolutions of the Conference, of 1835, on the discipline of the Connexion, cut off all hopes as to any immediate restoration of those rights of which the Societies have been deprived. The power of expelling from the Society has been declared to belong to the Preachers alone; and it has been resolved, that any Superintendent complaining of the verdict of any Leaders' Meeting, on the trial of an accused member, as improper, shall have the right of subjecting the acquitted member to another trial, before a court consisting of five Travelling Preachers alone; by whom the acquitted member may be condemned, and expelled the Connexion!!

In consequence of this state of things, the London Wesleyan Association was originated: several places of worship have been opened, and Societies formed for the purpose of obtaining all the benefits of Religious Communion, for those who can no longer sit under the ministry of those who claim to exercise such authority

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over them. For the regulation of those Societies the following rules were drawn up.

It will be observed that those rules give to the members of Society more power, as to the government of the Body, than the Association has thought it right to call upon the Conference to concede. There are however many reasons, why regulations proper to be adopted in reference to the present circumstances of the Association, should be, in some respects, different from the regulations which it is proper to require the Conference to adopt. The desire on the part of the Association has been, not to widen, but as much as possible, consistently with truth and righteousness, to narrow the grounds of disagreement, that no needless impediment should be thrown in the way to hinder a speedy adjustment of the differences which unhappily exist. The Association would rejoice to learn that there is a willingness on the part of the Conference, for the Societies to be governed in accordance with the spirit and intention of the rules agreed to by the Conference in 1795 and 1797. It is however necessary, that resolutions as free as possible from all ambiguity, should be adopted; that in future their meaning may not be subverted, by giving to equivocal expressions a sense contrary to the original intention. The Association has recommended that such resolutions as the following should be agreed to by the Conference.

- I. That no censure, suspension, or expulsion, be pronounced upon any Officer, or Member, without the previous CONSENT of the majority of the Meeting to which the individual is Methodistically accountable. An Officer, as such, to be accountable to the Official Meeting to which he belongs, and all Members to the Leaders' Meeting.*
- II. That all our Official Meetings have the unfettered right of addressing the Conference on any subject which they may think affects their interest; and that if any Superintendant should refuse to put to the vote any resolutions regularly proposed, for the before-mentioned purpose, then the Meeting to have authority to appoint another person, to be, for that time, the Chairman of the Meeting.

* An appeal might in all cases lie to the Quarterly Meeting.

- III. That before the Conference passes any new rule, or regulation, affecting the Societies, the opinions of the people, through the Quarterly Meetings, in the preceding year, be taken thereon; and unless a majority of the members' as represented by such Meetings, agree to such proposed rule, or regulation, it shall not become the law of the Connexion.
- IV. That, when any accusation is made against a Travelling Preacher, which requires to be investigated before the Meeting of Conference, in all such cases, the accusation to be referred to a Meeting of the Preachers in the District, with the Trustees, Leaders, and Stewards of the Circuit, in which the accused Preacher is stationed: the majority of such Meeting to determine thereon, according to the Plan of Pacification of 1795.
- V. That, as at present, there are some Circuits in which Leaders and Local Preachers are not allowed to be Members of the Quarterly Meetings, it should now be declared, that the Quarterly Meetings consist of the Travelling and Local Preachers, the Stewards, Leaders, and Trustees, being Members of the Society.
- VI. That all rules, regulations, or usages, contrary to the spirit and meaning of these regulations, be repealed and discontinued.

These resolutions generally accord with the spirit and intention of the solemn covenants made by the Conference with the Methodist Societies in 1795, and 1797.

It now rests with the Preachers to adopt means to restore peace to the connexion. To accomplish so important an object, ought to be the earnest desire of both the Preachers and People. A lasting peace, must however, be founded upon right principles. The power of the Preachers must not rest upon a violation of the rights of the people. The rights of all must be defined, respected, and preserved. If the Conference shall still persevere in refusing to agree to such terms, then, those who know how important it is to the interests of true religion, that human dogmas, and undue power on the part of the Ministers of religion, should not be substituted for the laws of Christ, and supersede his authority as king over his church, are required, by all proper means, to assert and maintain their freedom from such unscriptural dominations.

RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

AS TO THE ADMISSION OF MEMBERS.

1. It is required of all persons desirous of joining the Society that they should, "have a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins;" upon these conditions they may commence meeting in class. In order to admission, and continuance as members, they must go on to prove their sincerity by observing the following rules, which are derived from the Holy Scriptures, and were first published by Messrs. J. & C. Wesley, for members of the Wesleyan Societies.

"*First.* By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind: especially that which is most generally practised. Such as

The taking the name of God in vain:

The profaning the Day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness; *buying or selling spirituous liquors*; or *drinking them*, unless in cases of extreme necessity:

Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; *returning evil for evil, or railing for railing*: the *using many words* in buying or selling:

The *buying or selling uncustomed goods*:

The *giving or taking things on usury*, i. e. unlawful interest:

Uncharitable or unprofitable Conversation: particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or Ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us:

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God.

As, The *putting on of gold or costly Apparel*:

The *taking such diversions* as cannot be used in the Name of the Lord Jesus:

The *singing those songs, or reading those books*, that do not tend to the knowledge or love of God:

Softness, and needless self-indulgence :

Laying up treasure on earth :

Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up Goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity : doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men :

To their Bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving Food to the Hungry, by clothing the naked by visiting or helping them that are Sick, or in Prison :

To their Souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with, trampling under foot that enthusiastic Doctrine of Devils, that, " We are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it."

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their Desire of Salvation,

Thirdly, By attending on all the Ordinances of God : such are,

The public worship of God :

The Ministry of the Word, either read or expounded :

The Supper of the Lord :

By doing good, especially to them that are of the Household of Faith, or groaning so to be ; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in Business : and so much the more, because the World will love its own, and them *only*.

By all possible *Diligence* and *Frugality*, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the Race that is set before them, *denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily* ; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ ; to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world ; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

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Family and private Prayer :
 Searching the Scriptures : and
 Fasting or Abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, the only Rule, and the sufficient Rule both of our Faith and Practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known to them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the Error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."

May 1, 1743.

J. and C. WESLEY."

2. Persons having began to meet in class shall be considered as candidates for admission into the Society, and if recommended by a leader, or other member of Society, the Preacher may admit them on trial. The leaders shall give the Society Steward the names of all the members who are on trial, that they may be read over at a Society Meeting, at least one week, before the Quarterly Visitation of the Classes.

3. If any member of Society objects to the admission of any candidate, the objection must be communicated to the leader of the class in which the candidate meets, who shall enquire into the complaint, and see the parties together; and if such explanation be not given as removes the objection, then the case shall be brought before the Leaders' Meeting for decision, *both* parties having notice to attend: and if the decision of the Leaders' Meeting be not satisfactory, either party may appeal to the Quarterly Meeting, which shall finally decide the case.

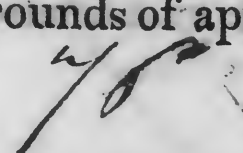
Members of other sections of the Wesleyan Community, or of other Religious Societies wishing to join, may be admitted as members, upon their being proposed at, and approved by the Leaders' Meeting; the names of persons so admitted shall be read at the Society Meeting.

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II. AS TO THE TRIAL OF ACCUSED MEMBERS.

If a member is aggrieved by any other member, or has reason to believe that the conduct of any member is not conformable to the Word of God, the first step to be taken is to communicate with the person concerned. If satisfactory explanation be not obtained, and it is thought necessary to proceed further in the matter, it shall then be mentioned to either the Leader of the member preferring the charge, or of the member against whom it is preferred, or to both of them; but if either the accused, or the accuser, or both of them be Leaders, then to some other Leader or Leaders, who shall see the parties face to face: if it is then found to be a case requiring further proceedings it must be brought before the Leaders' Meeting, or in those Societies where there is no Leaders' Meeting, before a Special Meeting of the Society, or if the respective parties consent, before a select number of Members.

Before the trial six days notice must be given in writing to the accused, of the time and place of trial, of the name of the person or persons preferring the charges, and of the charges on which the trial is to take place. The accused shall be allowed to have the assistance of any member of Society when upon trial. The Meeting shall determine by vote, its opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the party, and also, if guilty, what judgment shall be pronounced; but no person shall be suspended or expelled the Society, unless a majority of the members of the meeting present concur, that suspension, or expulsion should take place. The Chairman in this case is only to give one vote. If the person preferring the charge, or the accused, should be dissatisfied with the decision of the Leaders' Meeting, or with the decision of the Members of Society, where there is no Leaders' Meeting, an appeal will lie to the decision of the Quarterly Meeting upon giving notice in writing to the Society Stewards, such notice to specify the grounds of appeal, and to be delivered



within a fortnight after the decision, against which the appeal is made.

The Society Stewards shall lay all notices of appeal before the Quarterly Meeting, and give the parties concerned a week's previous notice to attend: the decision of the Quarterly Meeting to be final.

APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS.

Whenever a Leader is wanted for a Class, the Leaders' Meeting shall appoint some person to go and meet the Class, giving him direction to nominate some person as Leader for the approval of the Class. If the Class object to the person, or persons nominated, or if there is any person they wish to recommend to the Leaders' Meeting to be appointed over them, the case shall be reported to the Leaders' Meeting, who shall again take the subject into consideration, and give instructions for the nomination of such person, or persons, as may appear to them suitable for the office, and likely to be acceptable to the Class.

Persons having been nominated by the Leaders, and approved by the Class, shall then attend the Leaders' Meeting to give an account of their Christian experience, and of their knowledge and belief of the doctrines of God's Word. When if it appears to the meeting, that they are qualified for the office, they shall then be appointed the Leader of the Class.

If the Leaders' Meeting should be of opinion, that there are any persons in their Society, likely to be useful as Leaders in raising a new Class, they may nominate and appoint such persons to the office of Leader; such persons however shall not be entitled to vote as Leaders, until they have five members.

If any persons, having been Leaders of the Methodist Society, shall be desirous of joining our Society, and if there be persons who are willing to become members of a class under their care, the Leaders' Meeting may appoint such persons to the office of Leader, and may, if it thinks proper, dispense with the examination before referred to.

ADMISSION OF PREACHERS.

Candidates are to be first proposed to the Preachers' meeting, when if upon examination they are found to be persons of piety, having correct views of the doctrines of divine revelation, and possessed of gifts likely to render them useful as public teachers, they will be admitted upon trial, and shall continue upon trial for six months at least, provided they continue to give satisfaction to the meeting. After they have been six months upon trial, and have given sufficient proof, that their doctrines and conduct are such as becometh the oracles of God, and that their labours are useful and acceptable, they shall be recommended to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, to be recognized as fully admitted to the office of Preachers. The Circuit Quarterly Meeting shall however have power to accept or reject a preacher so recommended.

No person shall be admitted, or continued as a Preacher among us, who does not profess to believe and teach, in accordance with the word of God.

1. The Divine authority of the sacred Scriptures.
2. The Doctrine of the fall of Man, and the consequent universal depravity of the human race.
3. That Jesus Christ is truly and properly God—and that he took the nature of man into union with his Divinity.
4. That Jesus Christ died upon the Cross to make an atonement for the sins of all men.
5. That repentance precedes justifying faith.
6. That salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
7. That believers in Jesus Christ should have the witness of the Spirit, and that they are required to prove the genuineness of their faith, by obeying the precepts of God's holy word, and endeavouring to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ.
8. That there will be a general resurrection and future judgment; and that the happiness of the saints, and the misery of the wicked, will be everlasting.

That if any person already recognized as a Minister of the Gospel, offers himself to become a Preacher among us, the Preachers meeting may if it thinks fit, accept of his services, without his being put upon trial; subject, however, to the approbation of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

The Leaders' Meeting or where there is no Leaders' Meeting, the Society Meeting, shall have the right of proposing to the Preachers' Meeting, any person they may think qualified to become Preachers among us.

SOCIETY MEETING AND STEWARDS.

Once a year the members of Society, connected with each place of worship, shall be called together, by notice given in the Classes and from the Pulpit, when the Stewards shall report the state of the finances of the Society for the preceding year. At this Meeting the Society and poor Stewards shall be chosen. In those Societies, where there are upwards of fifty members, one other member may be chosen, in addition to the Stewards, and for every succeeding 30 members, one other additional, who with the Stewards shall, as the representatives of the Societies, be members of the Leaders', and Quarterly Meetings. The Society and poor Stewards, and other representatives are to go out of office annually, but are to be eligible for re-election. The right of nomination is to belong to the male members of the Society. In case of any vacancy occurring in the office of Steward, by removal from Society, or by resignation, the Leaders' Meeting shall have authority to fill up such vacancy.

The Chapel Stewards shall be appointed by the Trustees where a regular Trust is formed, in other cases the appointment of Chapel Stewards shall be with the Leaders' Meeting—the Chapel Stewards being members of Society, shall be members of the Leaders', and Quarterly Meetings.

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LEADERS' MEETING.

The Leaders' Meeting shall consist, of the Preachers meeting in the classes belonging to that particular place of worship : of the Class Leaders : the two Society, and two poor Stewards : the Chapel Stewards, being members of Society, and the additional representatives, if the Society on account of number is entitled to appoint any. In small Societies it will not be necessary to have so large a number of Stewards.

At the Leaders' Meeting, the Leaders shall pay the money received from their classes to the Stewards : Enquiry must be made as to the attendance of the members at their Classes, and at the other means of grace—relief to be given from the Poors' Fund, for those members who are in want ; and the affairs of the Society, generally regulated.

PREACHERS' MEETING.

The Preachers shall meet Quarterly, and whenever it may be necessary, for the purpose of examining candidates for admission as Preachers ; for supplying the places of Preachers who cannot fulfill their appointments : for considering the propriety of proposing to the Quarterly Meeting, new places to be put upon the plan, and whether any alteration is needed in reference to the times of service at any place already on the plan : but no alteration is to be made as to the hour or times of service at any place, without the mutual consent of the Preachers', and the Leaders' Meeting. At the Preachers' Quarterly Meeting, enquiry shall be made, whether each of the Preachers continues to adorn his Christian profession : to labour zealously and faithfully in the discharge of the duties of his office : and whether his labours are generally acceptable and useful.

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If any accusation is preferred against a Preacher, the charge must be investigated either at the Preachers' Quarterly Meeting, or at a Meeting specially convened. Before any Preacher shall be put on his trial, he shall receive at least a week's notice of the time and place of trial, with a copy of the charges to be preferred, and the name of the person by whom they are brought. The Preachers' Meeting shall have authority to reprove or suspend. Such suspension, to continue until removed by vote of the Meeting, or by an appeal against the decision of the Preachers' Meeting, to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting. Notice to be given to the Chairman of the Meeting, of an intention to appeal, within one fortnight after the decision is given against which the appeal is made. Any person having a charge to prefer against a Preacher must proceed in the same way as pointed out, in reference to bringing accusations against members of Society.

CIRCUIT QUARTERLY MEETING

Consists of all the Preachers, Leaders, Stewards, the additional representatives, chosen according to rule, and of the Trustees of Chapels secured to the use of the Society, being members of Society. This Meeting shall examine and audit the Society and Chapel Stewards accounts: it shall hear and decide all appeals from the Leaders' and Preachers' Meeting: it shall determine upon the acceptance, or rejection, of the persons recommended by the Preachers' Meeting, to be admitted as Preachers into full connexion: it shall enquire into the state of the several Societies, and give such advice as may be likely to promote their prosperity: to consider the propriety of opening additional places of worship; no new place of worship to be taken without the consent of the Quarterly Meeting, or of a Committee consisting of an equal number of Preachers and other persons appointed by that Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting shall dispose of the funds of the Circuit, in defraying the general expences; in aiding those Societies which are unable to meet their

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expences: or in extending the work, by assisting in opening new places.

The Quarterly Meeting shall appoint, one of the Preachers to be Chairman of the Circuit; also a Secretary who shall keep the minutes, and summons the Meeting: the Chairman and Secretary to go out of office at the end of one year, unless re-elected.

The Circuit Chairman, shall be entitled to attend and preside at all our official Meetings, he shall receive notice of all Meetings held for the trial of either official or private members, that he may have the opportunity of being present, and he shall put to the vote all questions regularly moved and seconded, or refusing to do so, the Meeting shall appoint another person to be, for that time, the Chairman of the Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting shall annually appoint a Circuit Steward, who shall be the Treasurer of the General Circuit Fund.

The Quarterly Meeting shall from time to time appoint, such of the Preachers as it may think most proper, to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The plan of the appointments of the Preachers shall be made by a Committee, consisting of an equal number of Preachers, and other persons, to be appointed by the Quarterly Meeting.

FINANCES.

The Weekly Contributions from the Classes, and the Ticket Money, shall be brought to the Quarterly Meeting, and disposed of as follows:—One-half of the amount shall be returned to the Stewards of the Societies, to be applied under the direction of the Leaders' Meeting, in defraying the expenses of their places of worship, if such help be needed; or in assisting poor members of Society when in distress: and if at the end of the quarter any balance of such money, remains in the hand of the Society Steward, it shall then be paid into the hands of the Cir-

cuit Steward. The other half of the Class and Ticket Money shall be received by the Circuit Steward, and be disposed of under the direction of the Quarterly Meeting, as before specified.

The collections at the Sacrament and Love Feasts are to be exclusively appropriated to defraying the expences they occasion, and relieving the Poor Members of Society.

The preceding Rules are to remain in force until altered or rescinded by the Quarterly Meeting. Any person intending to propose any alteration as to these rules, must give fourteen days notice of such intention, to the Circuit Secretary, specifying the nature of the proposed alteration, that seven days notice may be given to the members of the proposition to be brought forward. A Special Meeting of the Quarterly Meeting may be held upon requisition signed by twelve members of the Meeting, such requisition to be delivered to the Circuit Chairman.

At a Meeting of the Preachers, Leaders, Stewards, and representatives of the respective Classes, with the Committee of the Association, the preceding Rules were adopted and ordered to be printed.

R. ECKETT, Chairman.
H. B. KING, Secretary.

May, 1836.

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RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

1. IN the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That they might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together; which from thenceforward they did every week; viz., on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them: and they always concluded the meeting with prayer, suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the METHODIST SOCIETY, first in London, and then in other places. Such a Society is no other than “A company of persons, who, “having the Form, are seeking the Power, of GODLI-
“NESS: united, in order to pray together, to receive
“the word of exhortation, and to watch over one ano-
“ther in love, that they may help each other to work
“out their Salvation.”*

There is only one condition previously required of those who request to be admitted into this Society, namely, *A desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.*† But wherever this is fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits.‡

* “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
Gal. vi. 2. Heb. x. 24. Acts ii. 24. † Matt. i. 21. ‡ Matt. iii. 8.

That it may the more easily be discerned, whether the members of the Society are working out their Salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode, or as it may suit their convenience. There are about twelve persons, or more, in each class; one of whom is styled the Leader.

No person is admitted upon trial, till he has met three or four times in a Class, and is recommended by a leader, or by a proper person, and receives a note from a travelling preacher, and the rules of the society. Having met two months on trial, and being recommended by the leader, he then receives a Ticket, and is considered as a member of the society.

Persons are received into society in large towns, on the Sunday following the quarterly visitation of the classes. The officiating preacher then reads over their names in the society meeting.

A Leader ought to be a person of *clear experience, and sound judgment, truly devoted to God, zealous for the salvation of souls, of upright conversation, and one who has gifts proper for the work.* He is nominated by the superintendent, at a leaders' meeting, and if approved of by a majority of the leaders present, is confirmed in that office.

It is the business of a Leader to see all the persons belonging to his class *once* a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper. Not only how they keep the Rules of the Society, but how they grow in the knowledge and love of God. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require. To receive what they are willing to give for the support of the Gospel. To meet the Preacher and Stewards of the Society once a week, in order to inform the Preacher of any that are sick; or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved. To pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several classes, and to show their account of what each person has contributed.

A Steward of the Society, ought to be *an experienced*

Christian, of upright conversation, and one who can write and keep fair accounts. He is chosen to his office at a quarterly, or at a leaders' meeting. He is then nominated by the superintendent, and if approved of by a majority of the persons present, confirmed in his office for *one year*. And at the end of the year is either re-elected, or another person chosen into his place. But no leader or steward can be put out of his place, but by a majority of leaders, or a quarterly meeting. Neither can any member of the society be excluded but by a majority at a leaders' meeting.

All the members of the society must continue to evidence their desire of Salvation. By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practised. Such as the taking the Name of God in vain. The profaning the Day of the LORD, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; by employing a barber; by making or going to any feast or wake; or by learning the military exercise as a volunteer, or by attending to see them exercise on the Lord's Day.

They must avoid drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity. Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother: returning evil for evil, or railing for railing.* The using many words in buying and selling. The buying or selling uncustomed goods. The giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest.† Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; all foolish talking and jesting.‡ Evil speaking, particularly of magistrates and ministers, seeing that in the oracles of God, we are commanded to be subject to the higher powers; and that *Honour the King*, is there connected with the *Fear of God*. ||

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us. Doing what we know is not for the Glory of God; as the putting on of gold or costly apparel; the follow-

* 1 Pet. iii. 9. † Ps. xv. 5. ‡ Eph. iv. 29. || 1 Pet. ii. 17.

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ing the vain and foolish customs or fashions of the world.*

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; such as *Dancing, Cards, Plays, Balls, or Horse-races*. None of which can be reconciled to the advice of the Apostle.†

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge and love of God.‡

Softness and needless self-indulgence: Laying up treasures upon earth: Borrowing money without a probability of paying it again; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.||

It is expected of all who continue in the society, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation. By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men. To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping those that are sick or in prison.§

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting, all we have any intercourse with.¶

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of Faith, or earnestly desiring so to be; employing them preferably to others.** Buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.†† By all possible diligence, frugality, and cleanliness, that the Gospel be not blamed.‡‡

* "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Rom. xii. 2, and 1 Cor. x. 31.

† "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." Eph. v. 16.

‡ Eph. v. 19, and James v. 13.

|| "The wicked borroweth and payeth not again." Psa. xxxvii. 21.

§ "To do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16. Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

¶ "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Levit. xix. 17.

[**Especially barbers who do not follow their business on the Lord's Day.]

†† Rom. x. 12. Heb. xiii. 1.

‡‡ 2 Cor. vi. 3. 1 Cor. x. 23.

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By running with patience the race that is set before them: Denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily: submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men will say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.*

It is expected of all who desire to continue in the Society, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation. By attending all the ordinances of God.† Particularly the ministry of the word, where it is preached or expounded in its primitive purity, at all opportunities; carefully, with earnest prayer to God for a blessing upon what they hear.‡

The Supper of the LORD whenever it is administered, with solemn prayer, and deliberate self-devotion.||

Family prayer, morning and evening at the least.§

Private prayer also, morning and evening, and oftener if opportunity serve.¶

Searching the Scriptures; by reading some part of them every day, carefully, seriously, and with earnest prayer for a blessing from God; and doing this fruitfully, immediately practising what they learn.**

Fasting or abstinence, especially on the four quarterly fasts, (viz.) The first Friday after New-year's day, after Lady-day, after Midsummer-day, and after Michaelmas-day.††

No member of the Society shall marry with an unbeliever, or a person who does not fear God and walk in

* "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake." Matt. v.

†† Heb. xi. 2.

† Psalm xxiv. 4.

‡ "Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and keep it." Luke xi. 28.

|| Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 26.

§ "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the families that call not on thy name." Jer. x. 25. and Ps. lxxix. 9.

¶ "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will reward thee openly." Matt. vi. 6.

** "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39. Col. iii. 16.

†† Matt. vi. 16.

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his ways. Neither should they take any step towards marriage but in the fear of God, with earnest prayer for direction, and with the advice and approbation of their christian friends.*

To prevent imposters from defrauding our brethren, and likewise to introduce the real members into all the privileges and fellowship to which they have a just claim, when obliged to remove into other parts, they are enjoined to receive a Note of Recommendation from a travelling preacher, before their removal.†

The superintendent, or some travelling preacher, shall, if possible, meet the local preachers once a quarter; and no one can be admitted as a local preacher, unless he is proposed and approved of by a majority of that meeting. If this cannot be done in any particular circuit, then they must be proposed and approved of at the quarterly meeting.

Every local preacher must meet in class, and conform to all our discipline; and none can be excused in this respect.

In order to preserve the life and power of Godliness among us, the members of the society are desired carefully to guard against formality in public worship. In singing the praises of God, all the congregation are requested to join, [the women are desired to sing their part,] to take care not to sing too slow, to use no vain repetitions, and to sing no anthems. The hearers are entreated seriously and solemnly to join with the preacher in prayer, and to hear the word with the deepest attention; taking care not to talk in the chapel when the service is over, but to go quietly and silently away, so that they may profit by what they have heard.

In order to preserve our Rules, all the members of the Society should constantly show their tickets to the steward, or to those persons who may be appointed for that purpose, at the meeting of the society.

* "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." 2 Cor. vi. 14.

† "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 4.

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No person can continue a member of the society who becomes a bankrupt, unless it appears, upon examination, that he has acted upright, kept good accounts, and has not been concerned in the base practice of raising money by coining notes, commonly called the *Bill Trade*.

No person who is a trustee, shall be excluded from the society, until his crime or breach of the Rules be proved, in the presence of the rest of the trustees and leaders.

No person among us shall call another Heretic, Bigot, or any other disrespectful name, on any account, for a difference in sentiment.

No school-master or mistress shall teach dancing, or receive a dancing-master into their school; nor should the members of our society suffer their children to be taught to dance.

These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, the only Rule and the sufficient Rule both of our Faith and Practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

RULES

OF THE

BAND SOCIETIES,

DRAWN UP DECEMBER 25, 1738.

THE design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*" James v. 16.

The following questions ought to be proposed to every person that desires to be admitted into the Bands.

1. Do you enjoy the knowledge of Salvation by the remission of sins? (Luke i. 77.) And have you the peace of God in your conscience? (Rom. v. 1.)

2. Have you the love of God shed abroad in your heart? (Rom. v. 5.)

3. Have you the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God? (Rom. viii. 16.)

4. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you? (Rom. vi. 14.)

5. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plainly?

6. Do you desire that each of us should tell you whatever we think, or fear, or hear concerning you?

7. Do you desire, that in doing this, we should come as close as possible; that we should search your heart to the bottom?

8. Do you desire, that each of us should tell you from time to time, whatsoever is in his mind concerning you?

9. Is it your desire and design, to be on this and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

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